

April 16, 2021

**RE: COVID-19 Prevention Reminders**

Dear Students, Families and Staff,

It's heartening to see more students, teachers and staff heading back into the classroom. Your school and leadership have been doing a great job preparing facilities to welcome people back to campus. The number of cases linked to schools remains relatively low, but they do happen. For that reason, we want to share some important reminders.

**Stay Home When Sick**

Contact tracers at the Snohomish Health District are starting to see a growing number of cases that attended sports events, work or gatherings while symptomatic. Some had fevers or a cough, while others thought they were just fighting allergies. If you or your student aren't well, please stay home until symptoms resolve.

**Get Tested**

Unfortunately, we're also hearing reports of parents or friends urging people not to get tested to avoid an isolation or quarantine period. We cannot stress enough just how important testing, isolation of cases, and quarantining of contacts are to our fight against this virus. We can't interrupt transmission or prevent others from getting sick without them.

COVID symptoms can include one or more of the following:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- New loss of taste or smell

If symptoms develop, vaccinated or not, seek testing through your healthcare provider, clinic or pharmacy, or visit us online at [www.snohd.org/testing](http://www.snohd.org/testing). Those without internet access or needing language assistance can reach the Health District's call center at 425.339.5278 to schedule a testing appointment. The call center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Callers after hours or on weekends can leave a message to be returned on the next business day.

People should remain home and away from others until results are back, or to seek medical care if needed.

**Isolation and Quarantine**

If someone is notified that they are a close contact and need to quarantine, they should seek testing ideally 3-5 days after last exposure. However, the duration of someone's quarantine period as set by public health, employers and/or schools must still be fulfilled regardless of test results.

We are also getting requests from students and parents to appeal their quarantine or confusion because a clinic or provider told them they were cleared. The test is just an indication from that moment in time, but the research has shown infection can occur up to 14 days after exposure. That's why it's so important to quarantine for the full incubation period.

### Get Vaccinated

The exception to quarantine requirements for contacts to COVID-19? Being fully vaccinated. Individuals who are at least two weeks past their final dose do not need to quarantine at home, provided they remain symptom-free.

As a reminder, there are a number of ways to look for available vaccine appointments:

- Snohomish County Vaccine Taskforce's mass vaccination site registration information is provided at <http://bit.ly/snocovaccine>.
- Washington State Department of Health has updated its vaccine locator page at <https://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov> allowing people to search by their ZIP code.
- For a full list of Federal Retail Pharmacy Program locations, visit [www.vaccinefinder.org](http://www.vaccinefinder.org). Vaccine Finder is run by the federal government.

There are a few important reminders when vaccinating minors:

- Pfizer-BioNTech is currently the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized for those 16 years of age and older. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are authorized for people 18 and older at this time. Please verify what brand is available at a location prior to making an appointment.
- Those age 16 or 17 may need consent from a parent or guardian to get the vaccine. Providers may have different requirements for documenting consent, so please call ahead to find out what is needed.
- **Please do not seek or schedule appointments for ineligible minors.**

For the mass vaccination sites operated by the Snohomish County Vaccine Taskforce, people who are 16 and older may be vaccinated with parent or guardian consent for the Pfizer vaccine. An adult parent or legal guardian must accompany anyone under 18 to the vaccination appointment to sign the consent form onsite. They should also bring identification showing proof of age for the minor, such as a driver's license or birth certificate.

Trials are underway on vaccines for younger children. All this news is exciting and holds a lot of promise, but it also means we're still many months from having vaccines available for all ages. The emergency effort to vaccinate all adults in the county remains our number one priority.

Until vaccines are authorized by the FDA for those 15 years of age and younger, it's important that youth, families and staff ensure that all public health prevention measures are followed consistently. This means limiting social gatherings, masking up and keeping a distance from people they don't live with—each and every time—and washing hands or using hand sanitizer frequently.

Sincerely,  
Chris Spitters



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Health Officer